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CPW Report No. 30 -- USSR

(April 1-14, 1952)

SUMMARY

The output on industrial activities for the past 2 weeks is largely familiar. Poor production quality and rising costs are still emphasized as the major weaknesses to be overcome. Numerous industrial failings are brought to light in the Moldavian Finance Minister's message to the current session of the Republic's Supreme Soviet. Unlike his counterparts in the other Republics, the Minister also highlights the issue of income tax evasion. The traditional drive to intensify socialist competition in honor of May Day is getting under way.

There is evidence of growing official concern about the so-called no-conflict theory which, as indicated in a previous CPW report, is gaining popularity among Soviet playwrights. The backward Russian and Ukrainian stage production is said to require a great deal of ideological treatment. The Soviet victory in the last war is credited almost exclusively to the loyalty and superior personal qualities of the Great Russian people. The "myth" of the age-old Russian backwardness is "exploded" in a recent book on ancient Russian culture.

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INDUSTRY

Moldavia's 1951 Performance Criticized: In his budget message to Supreme Soviet of Moldavian SSR, Finance Minister Diorditsa reviews the serious shortcomings of "some ministries, administrations, and local organs" which fell short of their qualitative and quantitative targets in 1951. Unproductive expenditure, violation of "financial discipline" and indifference to production quality, the Minister declares, characterized the activities of most of them in the past year, and are applicable to the work of some of them this year as well. Beginning with his own Ministry, Diorditsa admits that the collection of income taxes in 1951 remained "underfulfilled." Implicit reference to tax evasion by individuals and collective farms is contained in the Minister's appeal to the financial organs and local Soviets "to insure complete respect for tax legislation" and see to it that all the taxes due "from the population and kolkhozes" are collected on time. Much stress is also laid on the "complete declaration of incomes to be taxed" since such declarations admittedly lacked completeness in the past.

The failure of a number of industrial enterprises to insure the quantitative fulfillment of the 1951 plan is aggravated by the fact that most of them "have not respected the range of products" and their quality. The Ministry of the Light Industry is singled out as the most wasteful, having incurred losses of material, fuel and other supplies to the tune of 4,800,000 rubles. Next in line is the Republic's lumber industry of whose ten enterprises only four managed to cope with their plans, and the total loss sustained was 2,431,000 rubles. The capital investment targets for 1951, it is revealed, were not achieved by several of the major Ministries including those of Agriculture and Food. The Ministry for Civilian Housing Construction "has improved its operations to a certain extent" but two of its largest construction trusts, Nos. 1 and 2, failed "to achieve the plan and permitted the cost of building to rise." The only reference made to present shortcomings is vague but the familiar terminology suggests a basic similarity to the 1951 draw-backs. The Minister lists as "the most important instances" of non-fulfillment of industrial objectives (a) poor organization of labor; (b) slow mechanization of manual work, and (c) unnecessary overhead expenditures.

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Another current shortcoming mentioned by Diorditsa is the hoarding of usable raw materials (mijloace de circulatie) and even finished products by a "number" of ministries, particularly by the Food Industry. Above-plan material reserves, he reiterates, are illegal and the rapid turnover of such materials is "one of the most important tasks" in the country's economic activities.

Complaints of high production costs are aired in broadcasts from Stalingrad and Zaporozhye oblasts, both heavy industry areas. STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 5) says that many of the oblast enterprises, far from reducing production costs, as scheduled, have actually raised them. The cost of metal production at the Krasny Oktyabr plant, for example, has risen by more than 6 million rubles, and the Stalingrad Tractor plant spends 4 percent more for making a tractor than specified by the plan. The same applies to the shipyards and medical equipment plant which are also said to "underestimate the necessity" of improving their qualitative indexes and to incur "large losses in materials and funds." A broadcast from Zaporozhye (Apr. 10) quotes the chief engineer of the Ukrainian Water Constructions Organization (Ukrvodbud) as admitting that "we have failed to fulfill our obligation" to reduce production costs. Failure is also conceded in the mechanization of construction work "to the maximum."

The overworked topic of quantity plus quality is discussed by KURSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 3) in the context of housing construction. Henceforth, says the paper, Socialist competition among the workers is to be used simultaneously for the pre-scheduled completion of plans and higher production quality. Only a combination of both will count, and achieving one without the other would be equivalent to failure:

The combined schedule must become law for every builder, and a violation of this law must be considered as an extraordinary occurrence for the entire body of workers.

Russian version:

Sovmeshchennyi grafik dolzhen stat zakonom dlia kazhdogo stroitelia, a ego narushenie chrezvychainym proisshestviem dlia vsego kollektiva.

The production of building materials for housing and other construction in Tambov oblast is far from satisfactory, according to TAMBOVSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 5). Last year's plans remained uncompleted, and current production, the paper intimates, leaves much to be desired. The oblast is rich in raw building materials but their processing is still "primitive and unsystematic." This point, however, is not elaborated. The paper merely asserts that the growing demand for building materials makes it imperative for the local industries, industrial cooperatives, and collective farms to step up the production of bricks without delay.

BOLSHEVITSKOYE ZNAMYA (Apr. 11) calls upon all the scientific, engineering and technical workers to popularize Stakhanovite production methods and generally lead the way in the rationalization (ratsionalizatsia) of industrial production. This call is prompted by the "complete indifference to this problem" manifested by such important organizations as the Scientific Research Technical Society of Welders (NITO svarshchikov), the Societies of Food Industry Workers and Railroad Workers. It is unfortunate, says the paper, that these and other (unnamed) organizations show "no interest in the needs of industry." Many administrators are said to be "afraid of being bothered" by various innovations and are satisfied to "let well enough alone." There is no excuse for such an attitude, the paper concludes, and the fact that such an approach to Stakhanovism is "against the State interests" makes any argument on that point irrelevant.

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KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 11) reveals that labor-consuming work has not yet been mechanized in a number of large projects which have all the machinery they need--they simply "make poor use of it" or don't use it at all. Among them are the Altai Lead Mines Construction Trust (Altai-Svinets-Stroy), The Leninogorsk Lead Mines Construction Trust (Leninogorsk-Svinets-Stroy) and the Zyryanovsk Construction Project (Zyryanovsk-Stroy). All of them are said to be behind in their construction program.

"Last year many enterprises in our oblast did not fulfill their State plans," says MOLOT editorially on Apr. 10. The best that Socialist competition could do, it is admitted, was to cut down the number of lagging enterprises. The reason is given in the familiar "formalism" in the direction of competition. The paper expresses the hope that the traditional pre-May competition (predmaiskoye sorevno-vanie) now getting under way will produce better results than in 1951. Pledges to increase production and cut production costs, it is claimed, are often made but seldom kept. The miners of the "Zapadnaya Kapitalnaya" project, for example, have almost made it a habit of committing themselves to greater achievements and then renegeing on their promises: "The schedule of the cyclic method is not being observed, the extraction norms are neglected"

Little enthusiasm about Socialist competition is noted also by the chief engineer of the Dnieper Constructions Organization (Dnepro-stroy). The heads of administrations, sections and brigades, he says, "are not creating the necessary conditions" for the competing workers. One of those conditions, it is intimated, is encouragement from above, and that is not always apparent: "the existence of formalism in the leadership of competition is still hindering the creative initiative of the workers." The engineer is particularly dismayed at the discovery that in a number of the Ukrainian Water Constructions Organizations (Ukr-vodbud) "we have not found records of obligations and results of competition" Pre-May Socialist competition is getting off to a slow start among the Dnepropetrovsk heavy industry enterprises, according to a DNEPROVSKAYA PRAVDA editorial of Apr. 10. Only this, says the paper, can account for the failure of the Nikopol Southern Pipe Plant (Nikopolsky Yuzhno-Trubny Zavod) to fulfill its quarterly production plan "in all respects." Among the other industrial enterprises which have not eliminated their "long standing production lag" are the Dneprovsk Industrial Construction Trust, the Dzerzhinsk Construction Trust (Dzerzhinsk-stroy) and the Krivoi Rog Construction Trust (Krivorozh-stroy).

IDEOLOGICAL AFFAIRS

Soviet Dramaturgy Scrutinized: That Soviet stage production is in for some kind of an "ideological overhauling" is evident from the increasingly dim view of that branch of art taken by PRAVDA and RADIANSKA UKRAINIA. As discussed in a previous CPW report, Soviet playwrights are accused of having taken the wrong approach (nepravilnyi podkhod) to the depiction of Soviet life and reality on the stage. The "primitive theory of conflictless dramaturgy," as it is officially referred to, is said to have made large inroads on the Soviet stage precipitating a state of ideological confusion.

An unsigned six-column PRAVDA article (Apr. 7, not broadcast) takes issue with this new theory and admonishes the playwrights against it in unequivocal terms: The idea that life in the Soviet society is "ideal" (idealnaya) and without any conflicts is all wrong, the paper declares, and the playwrights had better change their attitude accordingly. Dramatic art must portray the conflicts of life--without it there can be no dramaturgy (Dramaturgia dolzhna pokazyvat zhiznennye konflikty, bez etogo net dramaturgii). There is no reference to the possibility that the recent purges of art workers and the continuing official strictures about their ideological errors might have prompted the adoption of the so-called no-conflict theory as the safest way out. The pungency of the criticism directed against the evasion of conflicts, however, suggests that the playwrights' considerations of self-protection may be a factor:

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The main reason for the poverty of dramatic art ... is that the playwrights do not use profound conflicts of life as the basis of their production--they bypass them.

Russian version:

Glavnaya prichina bednosti dramaturgii ... sostoit v tom, chto dramaturgi ne kladut v osnovu svoikh proizvedeniy glubokie, zhiznennye konflikty, obkhodiat ikh.

Recalled in this connection also are the views of the Commission on Dramatic Art of the Writers Union made known at a recent conference to the effect that life in the USSR is to be portrayed as a conflict "between the good and the better" (mezhdu khoroshim i luchshim). Deriding this view as utterly wrong, PRAVDA is unusually frank about what it calls the actual state of affairs: "not everything is ideal with us ... there is no little evil in our life" (U nas ne vsyo idealno ... zla v nashei zhizni nemalo). The primitive theory of "no conflict" and the equally primitive stage production based on it, the paper continues, act as a brake on the development of Soviet dramaturgy (stali tormazom v razvitiu sovet-skoy dramaturgii) and account for its backwardness.

A de-emphasis of the collective aspect of life and greater stress on individualism (interesi lichnosti) are also suggested as one way of improving stage production, and Stalin is quoted as authority for the statement that "Socialism cannot be deflected away from the interests of the individual" (sotsializm ne mozhet otvlekatsia ot individualnykh interesov). Many of the recent plays that found their way to the stage, the paper concludes, are just as prosaic as those dealing with the working class and collective peasantry as a whole. Placing most of the emphasis on technology, Socialist competition, and plan fulfillment, they are said to neglect the individual, the people, their culture and "spiritual world" (dukhovny mir).

Obviously taking its cue from PRAVDA, RADYANSKA UKRAINA (Apr. 11) discusses the new no-conflict theory with reference to the Ukrainian playwrights in the same vein. Not entirely immune from accusations of "hostile bourgeois nationalist ideology," the latter are cautioned against the additional sin of subscribing to the no-conflict theory of Soviet life:

The main reason for these failures (to produce ideologically acceptable plays) is the fact that an erroneous and harmful theory has spread among the writers of plays and, above all, among critics in the Ukraine.

The paper reveals, in this connection, that of the hundred or so Ukrainian plays written in recent years "only a few have stood the test of the times."

In a long article on Ukrainian ideological affairs published in PRAVDA and broadcast from Kiev on Apr. 1, the Secretary of the Ukrainian Central Party Committee Melnikov inveighs against the "perversions and disruptions" (izvrashchenia i sryvy) in a number of individual works of literature and the arts. The Marxist-Leninist education of Party and Soviet personnel as well as the intelligentsia, says Melnikov, is still "the centre of attention" of the Ukrainian Party organizations. The Secretary also reveals that the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party has "uncovered serious shortcomings" (vskryl seryoznye nedostatki) in the syllabi of Ukrainian literature and language, text books, and readers. One of the mentioned shortcomings is that these books revealed a

superficial treatment of the questions of friendship of the USSR peoples, Soviet patriotism and the interrelations of Ukrainian and Russian literature

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Russian version:

v nikh poverkhnostno osveshchalis voprosy druzhby narodov
SSSR, sovetskago patriotizma, vzaimosvyazi ukrainskoy i
russkoy literatury ...

This superficial treatment, Melnikov discloses, has brought about a thorough going official scrutiny of the ideological aspect of Ukrainian education, and the manuscripts of a revised "History of the Ukrainian SSR" and "History of Ukrainian Literature" have already been prepared.

Referring to the Western oblasts of the Ukraine, the Secretary says that although the industrialization and collectivization programs have already produced good results, there is still a big ideological job to be done there. The Party organizations in Western Ukraine have not been sufficiently methodical in coping with ideological problems: "Some of them approach that most important problem from a 'campaign' point of view" (nekotorie iz nikh k etomu vazhneishemu delu podkhodiat po kampaneiskii). Greater emphasis must henceforth be placed on the education of the working people "in the spirit of hatred for the bourgeois nationalists, the agents of Anglo-American imperialists" (v dukhe nenavisti k burzhuaznikh natsionalistam-agentam anglo-amerikanskikh imperialistov). The Lvov Party Committee, in fact, failed to do anything about exposing bourgeois ideology and the "manifestations of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalism" (proyavleniia ukrainskago bourzhuaznago natsionalizma).

Secretary of the Kazakh Communist Party Shayakhmetov points out (Apr. 10, not broadcast) that the leaders of the Kazakh Ministry of Education are still suffering from political myopia (politicheskaya blizorukost). It is this short-sightedness, he says, that accounts for the "ideas alien to our people" (chuzhdie nashemu narodu idei) which have been injected into the textbooks of Kazakh literature and language. This problem, incidentally, is being solved in characteristic Soviet fashion: "It has been decided to compile anew and publish text books and anthologies on Kazakh literature and language" (Resheno zahovo sostavit i izdat uchebniki i khrestomatii po kazakhskoy literature i yazyku). The Kazakh Academy of Sciences and Writers Union are reminded that the improvement in their work is somewhat less than expected. Grave shortcomings are said to have been revealed in the training of scientific cadres, and the Academy administration has tolerated "the fouling up of the apparatus" (zasorenie apparata) with people lacking the necessary qualifications for scientific work. (There is no indication, however, whether the mentioned qualifications refer to academic training or political reliability.) The Kazakh philologists, says Shayakhmetov, "have not yet changed their methods to conform with Stalin's theory on linguistics" (do sikh por ne perestroili svoei raboty no osnove stalinskago ucheniia o yazykoznanii), and the result is continuous "serious mistakes."

The Soviet reading public wants better books, says PRAVDA editorially on Apr. 6, and the publishing houses had better do something about it. Now that a price ceiling (nominal) has been established on all printed matter, the demand for books has enormously increased, and with it the demand for better books. A good book, in the paper's opinion, is one that "carried the message of Marxism-Leninism" to the masses and popularizes the experiences of Communist construction. It is the chief task of the Central Board of Political Publications (Glavpoligraphizdat) to reorganize the various publishing organizations and prepare the ground "for work under new conditions" (k rabote v novikh usloviakh). One of these new conditions, incidentally, is to make it possible for publishing houses to operate without subsidies (bezdotatsionnaya rabota). The chief emphasis, however, is on the type of books to be published.

We must do everything to prevent the publication of sensational and insipid books devoid of interest to the public Publishing managers are required to strive for a substantially higher ideological, scientific and artistic level of all published literature.

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Russian version:

Nado prinyat vse mery protiv izdania khalturnikh, pustikh, ne predstavlyayushchikh obshchestvennogo interesa knig Ot rukovoditelei izdatelstv trebuyetsia, chtoby oni dobilis seryoznago povysheniya ideinogo, nauchnogo i khudozhestvennogo urovnia vsei vypuskayemoi literatury.

Supremacy of Great Russians Re-emphasized: In an anonymous talk for Marxism-Leninism students on the Soviet victory in the last war (Home Service, Apr. 10), the speaker says that the Russian Nation* again demonstrated its superiority to all the other peoples comprising the USSR. The Russians indeed are credited with turning the tide of the war and making ultimate victory possible. The Great Russians' "superiority" is, according to the speaker, manifested in their personal characteristics which, inferentially at least, are not possessed by the other Soviet nationalities:

It (the Russian Nationality) possesses a clear mind, staunch character and sound patience The implicit loyalty of the Russian Nation in the Soviet Government ... and the unreserved support of Bolshevik Party and the Soviet Government by the Russian Nation represented the decisive force which insured the historic victory over the foe of humanity, fascism.

Russian version:

U nego yasniy um, stoikiy kharakter, razumnoye terpenie Bezgranichnoye doverie russkago naroda sovetskomu pravitelstvu ... it vseernnaya podderzhka russkim narodom bolshevistskoy partii i sovetskogo pravitelstva okazalis toy reshayushchei siloy, kotoraya obespechila istoricheskuyu pobedu nad vragom chelovechestvanad fashizmom.

The views of the prerevolutionary Russian as well as Western historians that the early Slav civilization was inferior to that of the West are "cosmopolitan and antipatriotic" says Prof. Voronin in his recent book on ancient Russian culture, according to a broadcast from Moscow on Apr. 9. Age-old Russian backwardness is merely an idea concocted by the "falsifiers of history" during the past few decades and has nothing in common with the truth. The ancient Kiev Principality "vied with Constantinople" and was equal to it in strength. Feudalism in Russia, it is claimed, "did not impose cultural notions" imported from abroad but left indigenous Slav culture intact. Far from being inferior to Western culture, Russian culture was "in many ways" superior to it.

MISCELLANEOUS

Solar energy, according to Acad. Kirpichev (Apr. 6), can be used successfully for heating and other purposes 9 months out of the year south of the Kiev-Kharkov-Kamyshin-Aktyubinsk line. Portable "solar mirror machines" consisting of paraboloid-cylindrical mirrors are already in production. Soviet helio-engineers are said to have obtained super-heated steam with a temperature of 470 degrees with the aid of such paraboloid installations "even in winter."

That the street car is a Russian invention is "proved" in a book by Rzhysnitsky, Doctor of Technology (Apr. 7). The Siemens-built German electric railway car in

*The word used here is "natsia", a term seldom employed in the Soviet vernacular implying as it does a homogeneous cultural and linguistic group as well as race in a biological sense.

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1881 had been copied from the design of Igor Perovsky's tramcar built in St. Petersburg in 1879: "the first tramways in all countries were built according to Perovsky's design."

A Moscow broadcast of Apr. 7 quotes PRAVDA on the "creation" of two new towns of oblast subordination (oblastnogo podchinenia) in Kuibyshev oblast. One is Zhigulevsk, "a town of oil men and hydro-builders," and the other is Novo-Kuibyshevsk.